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Overview of the Statewide System of Support for School Districts

L E G I S L A T I V E A N A L Y S T ' S O F F I C E

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On Education
Hon. Anthony Portantino, Chair





New State Accountability System Adopted in 2013



Eight State Priority Areas

- Statute specifies eight priority areas for districts: (1) student achievement, (2) student engagement, (3) other student outcomes, (4) course access, (5) school climate, (6) basic services, (7) implementation of state standards, and (8) parent engagement.



Associated Performance Measures

- Statute specifies certain performance measures linked to the eight priority areas.



Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs)

- Districts must set goals and specify actions they will take to improve in the eight state priority areas. Goals are set based upon the performance measures.
- In developing LCAPs, districts must seek feedback from school employees, students, and parents.
- District LCAPs must be approved by county offices of education (COEs).



Evaluation Rubrics Adopted in September 2016



Evaluation Rubrics

- Statute directed the State Board of Education (SBE) to develop and adopt a method for assessing district performance using the performance measures connected to the eight priority areas.
- Districts to use rubrics as a self-assessment tool.
- COEs to use rubrics to identify districts that need assistance.



State Performance Indicators

- Encompasses several of the state priority areas: student achievement (subject matter test scores and English learner test scores), student engagement (graduation and chronic absence rates), school climate (suspension rates), and course access (college/career indicator).
- Performance measured for each district, school, and numerically significant student subgroup.
- Data displayed on California School Dashboard (Dashboard) website.
- Performance assessed based on a combination of current performance and improvement over time.
- Uses five color categories to classify performance: red (lowest), orange, yellow, green, and blue (highest).



Local Performance Indicators

- Districts develop their own local measures for basic services, implementation of state standards, parent engagement, and aspects of school climate beyond suspension rates.
- Districts report progress on each local indicator using a self-assessment tool that specifies whether a locally set performance standard was “met,” “not met,” or “not met for more than two years.”

District Support



Performance Indicators Used to Determine if District Support Needed

- Districts generally to receive support if any student subgroup is in lowest performance category for two or more priority areas.
- Districts to receive more intensive intervention if three or more student subgroups are in lowest performance category for two or more priority areas in three out of four consecutive years.



In December 2017, State Identified 228 Districts in Need of Support

- Of the 228 identified districts, 164 (72 percent) were identified because of the performance of their special education students. Most commonly, districts were identified because their special education students had low-test scores and high suspension rates.



COEs Required to Support Identified Districts

- No specific support requirements for COEs but assistance to an identified district can include:
 - Identification of the school district's strengths and weaknesses.
 - Assignment of an academic expert or team of academic experts to the district.
 - Request that the California Collaborative on Educational Excellence provide support to the district.



COE Funding and Responsibilities

- COEs Have Two-Part Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) Formula Generating Approximately \$1 Billion in Funding**
 - “Alternative education” part of formula tied to the number of students enrolled in juvenile court schools and county community schools.
 - “District services” part of formula tied to the number of districts and students in the county.

- State Law Requires COEs to Provide Some Services to Districts**
 - Most notably, must review and approve budgets and LCAPs for districts in county.

- COEs Choose to Perform Other Activities**
 - COEs can provide any other service at their discretion using their LCFF funding.
 - Common optional activities include business services (like payroll or accounting), professional development, and technical assistance.

- Required Activities Cost Much Less Than LCFF Provides**
 - After paying for alternative education (\$283 million) and required district budget and academic oversight activities (an estimated \$40 million), COEs spend the rest of their LCFF allocations (roughly \$650 million) on optional services.



California Collaborative on Educational Excellence (the Collaborative)



New Statewide Agency to Provide Assistance in Improving Student Outcomes

- Governed by a five-member board appointed by Legislature and Governor.
- Role and responsibilities of the Collaborative in current law are fairly broad and vague.
- Generally tasked with assisting districts needing or at risk of needing intervention.
- Intended to contract with experts for delivery of tailored district support.



Funding to Date

- State provided \$10 million one-time funding in 2013-14 budget to establish the Collaborative and fund its first three years of operations. The Collaborative has hired an Executive Director and core group of staff. From 2013-14 through 2015-16, the Collaborative spent a total of \$4.4 million on these staff.
- The 2016-17 budget carried over \$5.6 million from the initial appropriation and included an additional \$24 million (one time). The Collaborative has been using this funding to support its core group of staff, provide statewide training on how to use the evaluation rubrics, and administer a pilot program to assist school districts in improving student outcomes.



Major Spending on New Accountability System



To Date, State Has Used One-Time Funds to Develop and Implement New System

- \$2 million (2013-14) for SBE to develop LCAP template, spending regulations, and evaluation rubrics.
- \$40 million (2014-15) for COEs to assist school districts in developing their LCAPs.
- \$34 million (2013-14 and 2016-17 combined) for the Collaborative.
- \$400,000 (2017-18) to develop an electronic LCAP template and Dashboard mobile application.



Governor's COE Proposal



Increases COE Funding to Support Identified Districts

- Provides a \$55 million ongoing augmentation to COEs. Each COE to receive at least \$200,000, with additional funding based on the size and number of districts in the county identified for assistance (with the largest COE receiving an estimated \$4.9 million).
- COE support can include conducting a root cause analysis, assigning an academic expert, asking the Collaborative to provide assistance, or undertaking any other activities at COEs' discretion.
- Identified districts can opt out of receiving COE support if they demonstrate they have received support from an academic expert.



Establishes COE Regional Leads to Support COEs With Less Capacity

- Provides a \$4 million ongoing augmentation to create regional lead roles for six to ten COEs. Specific lead COEs would be identified through a competitive process.
- Each lead would assist COEs in the region to better support their districts and work with CDE and the Collaborative to develop resources. Leads also could provide direct support to identified districts when requested by a COE in its region.



Governor’s Approach Minimizes District Choice

- Districts must receive support from their COE, unless they use district funding to purchase alternative support. This could reduce quality and timeliness of support, as a COE might not have the expertise in all performance areas to address a district’s particular issues.



COEs Well Positioned to Provide Certain Types of Support, LCFF Funding Already More Than Sufficient to Provide It

- Given COEs approve district budgets, review LCAPs, and have access to Dashboard data, we think they are well positioned to examine causes of performance issues.
- COEs’ existing funding is more than sufficient to conduct statutorily required support activities, including helping districts that have been identified with performance issues.



Regional Lead Roles Appear Duplicative and Unnecessary

- Under current law, 11 COEs already receive a total of \$10 million to serve as regional leads to support districts and schools with performance issues.
- Under the Governor’s package of proposals, the roles of the regional leads appear to overlap with many of the expressed roles of COEs and the Collaborative.
- Given growing prominence of virtual networks of experts and the ability to travel statewide, it is unclear if regional approach is needed.



Recommendations



Recommend Requiring COEs to Conduct Root Cause Analysis of Identified Districts

- COEs are well positioned to assist districts in reviewing data and identifying root performance issues.
- COEs' existing level of LCFF funding is already more than sufficient to provide district support.



Recommend Rejecting Regional Lead Proposal

- The regional lead role is duplicative of the roles of COEs and the Collaborative.



Governor's Proposal for the Collaborative



Provides \$11.3 Million to the Collaborative to Support COEs and Districts

- Includes \$6.5 million ongoing Proposition 98 funding and \$4.8 million unspent and repurposed prior-year funding. Of the total amount:
 - \$5 million for supporting COEs and regional leads.
 - \$3.3 million for base administrative costs.
 - \$2.5 million for directly supporting identified districts.
 - \$500,000 for statewide trainings.



Assessment and Recommendation



Most Funding Does Not Directly Support Districts With Performance Issues

- More funding goes to supporting COEs and regional entities than districts with performance problems.



Recommend Requiring the Collaborative to Contract With Experts Interested in Providing District Support

- The Collaborative would use a competitive grant process to select numerous support teams that have expertise aligned with districts' identified performance issues.
- Grants would be open to COEs, districts, other providers of education services, and education consultants. The recommended system would take advantage of experts anywhere in the state who have the ability to help districts improve.
- The recommended system would provide districts with greater choice in selecting experts. Though not required, districts could work with the Collaborative to choose contracted experts best suited to help address their key performance issues. (Under state law, districts face repercussions if they fail to improve. After several years of district poor performance, the Superintendent of Public Instruction can require budget and LCAP revisions as well as stay and rescind district board decisions.)
- The recommended system is modeled off the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team—a longstanding agency with a track record of effective service in helping districts with problems.